

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicant: RUDOLF WAGNER ET AL.

Serial No.: Unassigned Group Art Unit: 1732

Filed: Herewith Examiner: L. Tentoni

Title: PROCESS FOR HANDLING WORKPIECES AND APPARATUS
 THEREFOR

Preliminary Amendment

Box Non-Fee Amendment

Commissioner for Patents
Washington, D.C. 20231

Sir:

Please enter the following amendments to the specification,
claims and abstract prior to the examination of the application.

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel all of the claims presently in the application
and substitute new claims 27-44 as follows:

27. Workpieces produced by a process of loading said
workpieces into a treatment facility; surface treating said
workpieces in at least one vacuum station of said facility
grouped as a station batch; and controlling at least the timing
of said process by a freely programmable process controller unit.

28. Workpieces produced by a process which comprises
loading said workpieces into a treatment facility having at least

two stations operating each on workpiece batches, grouped as respective station batches and being different with respect to the number of workpieces; and transporting said workpiece to and from said at least two stations grouped as a transport batch.

29. Workpieces produced by a process which comprises loading said workpieces into a treatment facility comprising at least two vacuum stations; loading and unloading said at least two stations with workpieces grouped as a transport batch; and controlling said transport batch for loading or unloading said at least two vacuum stations.

30. Workpieces produced by a process which comprises vacuum treating said workpieces grouped as respective station batches within at least two stations of a treatment facility; and controlling said station batches.

31. The workpieces of claim 27, wherein the process includes selecting the size of station batches in said vacuum station and in a further station of said facility to be different.

32. The workpieces of claim 27, wherein the process includes transporting said workpieces between said vacuum station and a further station of said facility grouped as a transport batch.

33. The workpieces of claim 32, wherein the process includes controlling said transport batch.

34. The workpieces of claim 28, wherein the process includes controlling said transport batch.

35. The workpieces of claim 34, wherein the process includes controlling said transport batch with a freely programmable process controller unit.

36. The workpieces of claim 28, wherein the process includes controlling said station batches.

37. The workpieces of claim 28, wherein the process includes controlling at least one of said station batch and of said transport batch with respect to batch size and to geometric arrangement.

38. The workpieces of claim 37, wherein said controlling is performed by a freely programmable process controller

39. The workpieces of claim 27, wherein the process further includes transporting said workpieces to and from stations of said facility grouped as transport batches, and selecting the number of said workpieces of said transport batches so as not to exceed the number of said workpieces of a station batch of a transport destination station.

40. The workpieces of claim 39, wherein the process further include selecting the number of said workpieces of said transport batches to be an integer fraction of the number of said workpieces of a station batch of a transport destination station.

41. The workpieces of claim 39, wherein the process further includes selecting the number of said workpieces of said transport batches to be an integer fraction of the number of said workpieces of a station batch of a transport departure station.

42. The workpieces of claim 27, wherein the process includes providing said workpieces in said stations within a mobile magazine.

43. The workpieces of claim 42, wherein the process includes transporting said workpieces to and from said stations within said mobile magazine.

44. The workpieces of claim 27, wherein the process includes mutually and controllably isolating at least a part of stations provided at facility.


REMARKS

If there are any questions regarding this amendment or the application in general, a telephone call to the undersigned would be appreciated since this should expedite the prosecution of the application for all concerned.

If necessary to effect a timely response, this paper should be considered as a petition for an Extension of Time sufficient to effect a timely response, and please charge any deficiency in fees or credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 05-1323 (Docket #622/43633C3).

Respectfully submitted,

January 23, 2001



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